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astronomical work analogous to that to which he gave his energies at Cordoba. He has already undertaken some longitude determinations, and arranged a time-ball, which is probably already giving daily signals, by which the shipping in the outer roads, twelve miles away, may correct and rate their chronometers.

I have spoken longer than I intended, but will make no apologies, for I know your friendly indulgence. It only remains to say for these Argentine scientific institutions, that I believe their success to be now assured; they will enter upon new and enlarged fields of usefulness, as indeed they ought, for the world moves; and, for myself, that the remembrance of this occasion and of your overwhelming kindness will be a source of pride to me through life, and to my children afterwards.

### SEMITIC LANGUAGES AT HARVARD.

IN a programme of the Semitic courses given by Professors Toy and Lyon in Harvard university, we find the following statements interesting to the young student. The Semitic family (one of the two inflecting families of the world, the other being the Indo-European) is divided into two groups, in which the several languages are distributed as follows:—

North-Semitic.	{	1. Babylonian-Assyrian.
		{ Classical Aramaic (Syriac). Palmyrene.
	2. Aramaic.	{ Jewish Aramaic. Samaritan. Various modern dialects.
South-Semitic.	{	3. Canaanitic. { Phœnician, older and later (Punic). Hebrew, biblical and post-biblical. Moabite, etc.
		4. Arabic, classical, and modern dialects of the Bedawin, and of Egypt, Algeria, and Syria.
	{	5. Sabeen, embracing several dialects. 6. Ethiopic, and the modern related dialects, Amharic, Tigre, Tigrinia.

The two groups differ from each other considerably in grammar and lexicon. A member of either is much nearer to its fellow-members than to any member of the other; thus, Assyrian is more important than Arabic for Hebrew lexicography, and Ethiopic and Arabic are of more value than Hebrew or Aramaic for Sabeen. Still, all these languages have much in common with one another, and each throws light on the others.

The choice of a student will depend on his special aim. Aramaic is the simplest Semitic language in forms, is necessary for the study of the Talmud (Gemara), and contains material for biblical textual criticism, and for the ecclesiastical and secular history of the first sixteen or seventeen centuries of our era. Hebrew is indispensable for the critical study of the Old Testament and Talmud (Mishna). Assyrian is grammatically interesting, and valuable for the early history of western Asia, and for North-Semitic civilization in general. Phœnician exists almost wholly in inscriptions, — a few of which are of historical importance (B.C. 500–A.D. 150), — and in Latin trans-

scription in the *Poenulus* of Plautus. Arabic has most fully preserved the old inflectional forms, is indispensable in the study of general Semitic grammar, and has a large and varied literature, of which the historical part is of great value, and the poetry interesting. Sabeen, or Himyaritic, is found only in inscriptions, which have recently revealed the existence of an ancient and remarkable civilization in southern Arabia, and a language presenting noteworthy peculiarities. Ethiopic, nearly related to Sabeen, is the language of the Christian period of the Semitic colony in eastern Africa. Its literature consists of a Bible translation, monkish chronicles, and versions of several important apocalyptic books. The grammar is remarkable for the symmetry of the verb. At present it has been replaced by various related dialects, one of which was the language of the late King Theodore of Abessinia.

No genetic relation between the Semitic and Indo-European families has yet been discovered. The lexicon of the one does not help that of the other, and only the most general connection exists between their grammars. It is only a seeming exception to this statement, where one language has borrowed from another, as is the case with the modern Persian and the Hindustani, a large part of whose vocabularies is taken from the Arabic, and the Eranian *Huzvareh*, which has taken much from Aramaic. Turkish, a member of still another family, is similarly indebted to Arabic.

### THE STONE AGE IN AFRICA.

AT the meeting of the Royal society of northern antiquaries, held April 14, 1885, L. Zinck gave an account of the discoveries hitherto made regarding the stone age of Africa. There was now no doubt that Africa had its stone age, as well as Europe. Both in the old cultivated land of Egypt and the well-known desert of Sahara, the inhabitants in their time had only instruments of stone; but he would speak only about the stone age of South Africa. About twenty years since, was made the first find of stone objects in the region of the Cape of Good Hope. We know now that the natives on the south-west coast of Capeland, even at the end of the sixteenth century, paid extravagant prices for iron, and Magaelhens had before found the natives of Madagascar using weapons of iron. Relics of the stone age are also found among the *Bu-lmen*, who were driven back to the Kalabari desert, and whose arrow-heads were of stone. There are found in South Africa, from an ethnological point of view, three peoples, — the Kaffirs, Hottentots, and Bushmen, — who represent three waves of migration. The last are the oldest people of the land, and have in their time extended themselves far to the south, where, in the rocky hollows, they have left monuments of various kinds, executed with much ability. They were acquainted with perspective, and had an appreciation of caricature. The Hottentots later drove them back, but were themselves driven back by the Europeans and the Kaffirs. The last, who came from the north, began to encroach on the Cape territory